

Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions—the First 100 Years

The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 was the “light at the end of the tunnel” leading to educational institutions for Negroes in the Southern States. It raised the hopes and aspirations of the Negro and aroused the curiosity, interest, and sympathy of the Nation for the uplift of some 400,000 citizens who were former slaves.

Early Days

In the years immediately following the Emancipation Proclamation, three main forces were responsible for the creation and growth of Negro institutions that were either founded as such or later became land-grant institutions under the Second Morrill Act of 1890. These three forces were the Negroes themselves, religious organizations, and State legislatures.

The Negro citizens of the South played a major role in the founding of educational institutions accessible to them. Lincoln University in Jefferson City, MO, is a product of those enlisted men and officers of the 62nd and 65th Missouri Colored Volunteers who dreamed of a school for colored children and provided funds for its founding. Other examples of Negro involvement include the founding of what is now Fort Valley State College, Alabama A&M University, and North Carolina A&T University. A coalition of ex-slaves and former slave masters led to the chartering of Tuskegee University by the State of Alabama.

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore, founded by the Methodist Episcopal Church, stands as a memorial to the influence of religious organizations on the growth of black land-grant

by **B. D. Mayberry**, Director, Carver Research Foundation, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL



New Farmers of America calf show (circa 1935).

institutions. The remaining 1890 institutions were established by State or territorial legislatures.

In their early years, these institutions had two things in common: They were all designated as schools for colored people, and they were all chartered as normal schools for the training of colored teachers, because there was a shortage of trained teachers to expand educational opportunities for colored children.

The Morrill Act of 1862

The Morrill Act of 1862 provided for the establishment of at least one land-grant institution in each State. In States having legal separation of the races, the legislation was sufficiently flexible to allow for the establishment of

a second land-grant institution accessible to Negroes. Only Mississippi took advantage of this provision and established Alcorn State University in 1871 for Negroes and designated it as a “land-grant” school.

In Virginia, 1862 land-grant funds were extended to the Negro by way of Hampton University, a private institution. Several other institutions for Negroes received 1862 land-grant funds, but they were not designated as land-grant schools before 1890.

The Morrill Act of 1890

The Morrill Act of 1890 was passed specifically to provide further endowment of the 1862 institutions. A provision was included, however, indicating that institutions that were practicing

racial discrimination in admission would not be eligible to receive the 1890 funds. This provision was circumvented by establishing separate land-grant schools for the Negro. Each Southern State either established a new school for this purpose or took over an existing public or private Negro school and designated it as a land-grant institution. The historically black or land-grant institutions are listed in table 1.

The Land-Grant Mission

The basic land-grant mission, which has come to apply to both 1862 and 1890 institutions, includes instruction, research, and Extension.

Instruction. The 1890 institutions were under the same legislative mandate to provide instruction in agriculture, home economics, and mechanical industries as were the 1862 institutions, and they were already heavily involved in teacher training. This was continued as agricultural and other land-grant courses were phased in and became very significant by the turn of the century.

Instruction in agriculture, home economics, mechanical industries, and general education was continued until 1917, when the Smith-Hughes Act was passed, providing for the training of vocational teachers for the public schools. At this point, the 1890 institutions accepted the responsibility of training Negro vocational teachers. This continued until the Smith-Hughes program was folded into the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and later into the Carl D. Perkins Act of 1984.

Research. Research was included in the founding mission of the 1890 institutions, but research resources were not made available to most of these institutions. The Hatch Act of 1887 and the

Second Morrill Act of 1890 provided for agricultural research to be conducted in each State, usually on the campus of the 1862 school. An exception to this pattern was the branch experiment station established at Prairie View, TX, under provisions of the Hatch Act of 1887.

The State of Alabama established an experiment station at Tuskegee University in 1897, staffed it with George Washington Carver, and provided it with an annual appropriation of \$1,500. With this, Dr. Carver completely revolutionized agriculture in the deep South, by showing what could be done with soybeans, peanuts, and other alternative crops, and by doing research and training in such areas as soil conservation and crop rotation. In addition, he developed many commercial products from the peanut and the sweet potato.

Research support at the other 1890 institutions during the first half of this

century was too little to make a significant difference.

Extension. Outreach activities in the 1890 institutions predate the formal National Extension System, established under the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, by almost 40 years. Outreach efforts by Alabama A&M University date back to 1875, when William H. Council, the principal, published a farmers' newsletter to facilitate technology transfer. Tuskegee University initiated outreach activities in 1881, established an Extension department in 1889, and organized an annual farmers conference in 1892—which still operates after 98 years.

In 1896, Dr. Carver made weekend visits to the country in a wagon with demonstration tools, which evolved to become the Nation's first "movable school." This concept spread across the Nation, and to Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

T. M. Campbell was employed at Tuskegee University on November 12, 1906 to become the first Negro Cooperative Extension Agent in the United States. About one month later, John B. Pierce of Hampton University was employed in a similar position in Virginia. Campbell coordinated and supervised Negro Extension in the southern section of the Southern States and Pierce coordinated Negro Extension in the northern half of the Southern States.

The Smith-Lever Act

Beginning in 1914 under the Smith-Lever Act, Negro Extension programs were operated by the 1890 institutions in each of the Southern States, under the supervision and administration of the 1862 institutions. T. M. Campbell and John B. Pierce continued to work as coordinators, motivators, and facilitators within the Negro Extension program. In 1918 they were promoted to



George Washington Carver, innovator in research and extension.

Federal Field Agents for Negro Extension.

The 1890 institutions developed and executed a long list of special, and in many cases unique, approaches to reaching and serving the unreached. Examples include the “movable school” and such annual events as the “Ham and Egg Show” (a demonstration project on producing and processing swine and poultry), which was initiated by Negro County Agent Otis S. O’Neal at Fort Valley State College, GA, in 1916 and continued for more than 50 years. Other special activities included summer camps, judging contests, and talent shows open to Negro boys and girls. This Negro Extension System continued until the Civil Rights era of the mid-1960’s, when it was reorganized, integrated, and in many cases discontinued, purportedly in the interest of eliminating racial discrimination.

The Breakthrough in Federal Support

The breakthrough in Federal support of agricultural programs at 1890 institutions came following the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Starting in 1967, under the authority of Public Law 89-106, the Secretary of Agriculture allocated \$283,000 of discretionary funds to be divided among the 1890 institutions for research.

In fiscal year 1972, while still under the grant mechanism of PL 89-106, the Secretary of Agriculture used discretionary funds for Extension as well as research; the funds for that year amounted to \$8,600,000 for research and \$4,000,000 for Extension. By 1972, Tuskegee was included, but not as a land-grant institution (see table 2).

Starting in 1977, the 1890 institutions’ programs in research and Extension were funded directly under Public

Table 1. Founding Dates and Sponsors of Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions

Founding date	Name and State	Sponsor
1866	Lincoln University, Missouri	Civil War Negro Infantry Men
1871	Alcorn University, Mississippi	State Legislature
1872	South Carolina State University	State Legislature
1873	University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff	State Legislature
1875	Alabama A&M University	Group of Ex-Slaves
1876	Prairie View A&M University, Texas	State Legislature
1880	Southern University, Louisiana	State Legislature
1881	Tuskegee University, Alabama	State Legislature
1882	Virginia State University	State Legislature
1886	Kentucky State University	State Legislature
1886	University of Maryland Eastern Shore	Methodist Episcopal Church
1887	Florida A&M University	State Legislature
1891	Delaware State College	State Legislature
1891	North Carolina A&T University	Citizens Group
1891	West Virginia State College*	State Legislature
1895	Fort Valley State College, Georgia	Citizens Group
1897	Langston University, Oklahoma	Territorial Legislature
1912	Tennessee State University	State Legislature

*Voluntarily dropped “1890” designation in 1957

Law 95-113, requiring functional coordination with the respective 1862 institutions. By 1977, the annual appropriation for 1890 schools had reached \$13,352,000 for research, and \$8,400,000 for Extension, based on a formula, or percentage, of 1862 funding. These funding levels for programs continued to increase, so that in 1990, the centennial year, \$25,300,000 is allocated for research and \$24,000,000 for Extension.

In 1984, the U.S. Congress authorized a \$50,000,000 grant to improve research facilities at the 1890 institutions, and in 1986, \$50,000,00 was authorized for improving Extension facilities.

USDA/1890 Initiative

In the last quarter century, to make up for years of past discrimination, USDA has aggressively and forcefully supported the growth and development of the 1890 land-grant institutions. This began with the “breakthrough” in Federal formula funding of agricultural programs under the grant mechanism of Public Law 89-106 in 1967 and continued with the many efforts sponsored under legislative authority of the 1977 Farm Bill, Public Law 95-113.

USDA sponsored a symposium in Nashville, TN, April 24-26, 1988, which was cosponsored by the 1890 institutions and Tuskegee University and hosted by Tennessee State University. The goal of this symposium was to

Table 2. Federal Formula Funds for Research and Extension at 1890 Institutions and Tuskegee, 1967-1990

FY	Purpose	Research	Extension	Total
1967	Programs	283,000	- 0 -	283,000
1968	Programs	283,000	- 0 -	283,000
1969	Programs	283,000	- 0 -	283,000
1970	Programs	283,000	- 0 -	283,000
1971	Programs	283,000	- 0 -	283,000
1972	Programs	8,600,000	4,000,000	12,600,000
1973	Programs	10,883,000	6,000,000	16,883,000
1974	Programs	10,883,000	6,000,000	16,883,000
1975	Programs	11,824,000	6,450,000	18,274,000
1976	Programs	12,706,000	7,823,000	20,529,000
Interim	Programs*	3,176,000	195,572	3,371,572
1977	Programs	13,352,000	8,400,000	21,752,000
1978	Programs	14,153,000	8,833,000	22,986,000
1979	Programs	16,360,000	10,115,000	26,475,000
1980	Programs	17,785,000	10,453,000	28,238,000
1981	Programs	19,270,000	11,250,000	30,520,000
1982	Programs	21,492,000	12,241,000	33,733,000
1983	Programs	22,394,000	16,241,000	38,635,000
1984	Programs	22,844,000	17,241,000	40,085,000
1984	Facilities**	50,000,000	- 0 -	50,000,000
1985	Programs	22,474,000	17,741,000	41,215,000
1986	Programs	22,329,681	16,877,000	39,206,681
1986	Facilities**	- 0 -	50,000,000	50,000,000
1987	Programs	22,329,681	16,877,000	39,206,681
1988	* Programs	23,333,000	18,291,000	41,624,000
1989	Programs	24,300,000	18,300,000	42,600,000
1990	Programs***	25,300,000	24,000,000	49,300,000
Totals		\$398,486,362	\$287,328,572	\$685,531,934

* Federal fiscal year changed from July to October

** Congressional 5-year authorization

*** USDA funding proposal for the 1890 Initiative (January 1989)

enhance communication among the 1890 institutions, Tuskegee University, and USDA agencies in order to achieve and maintain active partnerships to strengthen the agricultural enterprise.

The symposium was attended by decisionmakers from USDA and the

1890 institutions. Secretary of Agriculture Richard Lyng expressed his personal commitment to enhancing and strengthening the relationship between the historically black land-grant institutions and USDA. He also emphasized the need to encourage minorities and women to pursue education and careers

in agriculture. Participants discussed how to attract more minority students into agriculture and strengthen links between the 1890 institutions and USDA.

A task force consisting of presidents of the 1890 institutions and career agency heads was established to provide oversight and assistance in carrying out symposium recommendations. A task force working group, with representatives from each USDA agency chosen for their particular skills, was established to help implement the 17 symposium recommendations.

The most publicized recommendation concerned the establishment of a USDA Liaison Office on each 1890 campus. By February 1990, each 1890 campus had a liaison office established, with at least one liaison officer based in it. The duties of these liaison officers are tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the institutions they serve. Yet in every case their value is immeasurable as a link between the specific 1890 institution and the Federal Government, especially USDA.

USDA has a full-time staffer in the Deputy Secretary's office to provide oversight, motivation, and supervision in implementing programs arising out of the Nashville symposium, as well as other initiatives taken by the Secretary and Deputy Secretary.

